

Environmental Resource Committee

March 1, 2017

Minutes

ERC Members present: Richard Hilderman, Jan Harris, Neil Gilbert, Sandy Payne

Officials Present: Councilmen Mark Benton, Rich Cerrato, John Corbett

Public: Chris Gruchawka, Mary Gruchawka, Greg Weiss, Nina Marable, Charlie Nern, Karen Barilla, Laura Lewis

1. Richard Hilderman called the meeting to order.
2. No Public Comments
3. Power Point Presentation – “Dredging Jinks, for an Island to Mainland link?” Is Jinks Creek Really a Non- Primary Nursery Area?

Richard Hilderman presented a Power Point Presentation on Is Jinks Creek really a non-PNA and why is this important? The Power Point Presentation is being made a part of these minutes for the ERC Meeting of March 1, 2017.

Neil Gilbert added two points: 1. Changing technology, climate change, and past storms within the past 50 years have had an impact on Jinks Creek classification possibilities. 2. On the 6 feet for photosynthesis, Jinks Creek has turbidity and suspended solids that 6 feet is not stretching the requirement.

Public Comments after the Agenda Item:

Karen Barilla asked if the PNA designation will affect dredging of Jinks Creek. Committee replied that dredging is not allowed in PNA classified areas.

Mary Gruchawka questioned the dredging of Mary's and Turtle Creeks as they are designated PNA. Richard Hilderman replied that the dredging of Mary's and Turtle Creeks is allowed as they have been dredged in the past and prior to CAMA regulations with permits.

Chris Gruchawka stated he had made a complaint to Marine Fisheries about commercial fisherman backing boats into the canals to scare fish into Jinks Creek.

Mark Benton, Councilman asked who pays for shellfish studies. Richard Hilderman stated that in the past Marine Fisheries paid for the studies to determine PNA's and Shellfish Areas.

Mark Benton asked: Once we get permits, won't Marine Fisheries look at Jinks to evaluate as a PNA?

Richard Hilderman answered that CAMA (CAMA grants the permits) does not take any responsibility for determining PNA but the ERC would like to ask that an evaluation of Jinks Creek be made.

Greg Weiss asked does not the designation of Jinks Creek as a PNA create more responsibility for the care of Jinks Creek?

Weiss also stated that at the Community Meeting last week, it was pointed out that a Grant was used to partially fund the dredging of Jinks Creek. How do the people feel about the dredging in Jinks Creek? It is his observation that most people seem to be opposed to that dredging. What is the Town's position? What was the justification for including Jinks Creek in the dredging proposal?

Rich Cerrato, Councilman replied that the purpose was to provide "deep water access."

Charlie Nern questioned the closed shellfish areas in Jinks Creek and what that impact had on shellfish waters.

Jan Harris responded that closed shellfish waters does not mean Jinks is not a shellfish area. The areas are classified by Marine Fisheries and the goal of the State of NC is to restore all impaired waters to their intended purpose. For Jinks Creek, that is clearly classified as Shellfish Waters and High Quality Waters. Just because you can't take shellfish to eat does not mean that it is not a shellfish area.

Nern stated that the waters had been closed because of septic tanks.

Harris responded that the waters at the eastern end of Sunset Beach were closed in 2004 with the advent of the 19th Street Subdivision land and that was because of stormwater runoff, not septic tanks. Harris also stated that until then, those waters had been some of the best open shellfish waters in Brunswick County according to the Wilmington DCM office. Stormwater is the leading cause of closed shellfish waters period.

Nina Marable stated that everyone on the island has a huge interest in this project as we are all concerned about the environment. Everyone in the town has an interest as this will change the character of the town.

Mary Gruchawka asked if once an area is designated a PNA, is that permanent.

Jan Harris responded that there is a regulatory procedure through the Coastal Resources Commission to change water classifications similar to the process that was used to remove the inlet hazard area from Mad Inlet.

Greg Weiss asked how susceptible is Marine Fisheries to political influence.

Committee answered that every state agency is susceptible to political influence.

Neil Gilbert made motion to accept the Power Point Presentation on Jinks Creek as a non-PNA. Motion seconded by Sandy Payne. Motion carried unanimously.

Neil Gilbert made motion to send the Jinks Creek as a non-PNA Power Point Presentation to the Town Council with the recommendation that the Power Point Presentation be presented by the ERC at a Council Meeting or a Community Meeting. Jan Harris seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Agenda items suggested for next meeting: Recycling, bullet points for checklist as suggested by John Corbett, Councilman. Peter Larkin request that bike trails and hiking trails as proposed by the County.
5. Public Comment:

Charlie Nern, speaking on recycling, reported that Fibbers now has a plastic cup that is made 100% from corn products and is biodegradable. Nern asked if there is a requirement that restaurants in the town recycle. Sandy Payne replied we know of no requirement to recycle within the town of Sunset Beach.

Chris Gruchawka commented that he would like to see more discussion on stormwater runoff issues. Jan Harris replied that the Council had not given the ERC the charge to look at stormwater issues and therefore the ERC could not discuss stormwater issues in the town.

6. Meeting adjourned

Note: After adjournment but with three ERC members (Richard Hilderman, Jan Harris, Neil Gilbert) remaining at the table, John Corbett, Councilman, approached the table and stated that he did not want to say in the formal meeting that he had a problem with the wording of the title of the Power Point Presentation. Corbett stated that the title indicated a foregone conclusion that Jinks Creek is a PNA. Both Richard Hilderman and Jan Harris engaged in the conversation.

Minutes prepared by Jan Harris